

Brooklands School

Burnside Avenue, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 2DB

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are much lower than the national averages, most students make good progress. Their achievements are good or better.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding.
- Students' behaviour and safety are good. They feel safe, and rates of attendance are high. Most, on their journey through the school, demonstrate outstanding personal gains that help them move on successfully.
- The sixth form is good.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has introduced successful new systems that ensure the school is continuing to improve. Some of the headteacher's work is outstanding, such as in recognising the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Managers are rapidly improving the quality of teaching and students' achievements, through using effective performance management.
- The governing body has improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection and provides good support and challenge to school managers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, who are capable, do not yet have a full range of opportunities to gain qualifications equivalent to GCSE and Entry Level.
- A few parents, while supportive of the school, rightly report that they do not always receive as much information as they need about their children's care and education.
- Teachers sometimes plan for students to make steps of progress that are too broad. Teaching methods do not always promote active and independent learning.
- Most staff are skilled in working with students who cannot speak, but effective communication and the associated use of technological aids are inconsistent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, parts of lessons and an assembly given by six teachers and three teaching assistants. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector spent more than three hours observing teaching and learning. He listened to a few students reading formally and others when working.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, middle managers, teachers, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the school nurse. He joined a meeting of the school council and spoke informally with students throughout the inspection.
- Records of teachers' planning were scrutinised, as were other important documents concerning safeguarding, the curriculum, records of students' achievements and their progress, and plans for the future development of the school.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Two letters were received from parents and two telephone calls made with parents. Twenty two questionnaires were received from staff and the school's own analysis of recent surveys undertaken with students was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brooklands admits students from two to 19 years who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and complex moderate learning difficulties. Many have additional barriers to learning, such as autistic spectrum conditions and communication difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all have a White British heritage and currently, for almost all, their first language is English. The proportion entitled to support from the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or looked after by the local authority) is in line with the national average for most schools. About one third of students are girls.
- The school does not use alternative education but strong links have been formed with Craven College to provide courses for Brooklands students. The school has very recently introduced a mathematics course for older, more-able students, equivalent to GCSE and Entry Level but none have yet been entered.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection and the governing body has been reorganised with the introduction of new members. A new Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body have been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers must provide for students to have the opportunities to make the maximum possible progress in lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan for them to make very small steps in learning
 - teachers use a wider range of teaching methods to promote more active and independent learning
 - classroom staff make full use of communication methods and the associated technological aids throughout every area of the curriculum.
- Managers must provide a greater range of opportunities for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to gain qualifications equivalent to GCSEs and Entry Level, so that those with the highest levels of ability can fully meet their potential and move on to the next stages of education, training or employment as successfully as possible.
- Leaders and managers at all levels must ensure that the systems of communication between the school and students' homes are reviewed, redesigned and then implemented so that parents have as much information as possible about their children's care and education at school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All students have levels of attainment much lower than the national expectations for their age. Nevertheless, the information held by the school indicates that the great majority from all of the different groups of identified special educational needs make at least good progress. This was confirmed by the lesson observations and scrutiny of work undertaken during the inspection. For some students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, progress is outstanding.
- The school's information shows that those supported by the pupil premium funding achieve in a similar way to all other groups, as do the girls. Consequently, all students are fully included and none discriminated against in their education. The school promotes equality of opportunity well in this way.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, together with those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make sustained good progress in English and mathematics. The consistent use of a reading scheme helps pupils to understand about the sounds that letters make (phonics) and the school has used this over an extended period of time. Consequently, students through all areas of the school, including the sixth form, have built on these good foundations in reading and writing.
- Students make good progress throughout the secondary department. However, the rate of progress here is slightly slower than in the primary section. Through effective leadership and management, the senior team has discovered this and put measures into place to close this gap.
- The evidence of progress for older students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is limited by a lack, until very recently, of access to externally accredited courses equivalent to GCSE and Entry Level. The school has recently made it possible for students to undertake courses that lead to these qualifications in mathematics but more must yet be done to provide a wider variety of accredited courses such as these, for the more-able students.
- Before leaving school the majority of students undertake courses of study that provide them with the opportunities to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills, undertake work experience and gain vocational training. Students are awarded certificates that recognise their achievements in these courses that promote their independence.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly and is at least good in every area of the curriculum.
- For all age groups teachers plan, prepare and teach a wide range of subjects to the students in their own classes. In this, they are supported well by managers at every level. For example, the quality and consistency of mathematics teaching is ensured by regular visits to classrooms by the subject coordinator. Similar measures are in place concerning the teaching of English.
- Class teachers, those who operate as specialist subject teachers and those in the sixth form, are confident and accurate in encouraging the use of literacy in lessons. Consequently, students learn to apply their skills wherever they are needed.
- For those students with the most extreme learning difficulties, the ability of staff to communicate with them is paramount. This was observed during a whole-school assembly when the lead teacher used three different methods of communication all at the same time to ensure that as many students as possible could take part. However, the skills of staff in communicating with non-verbal students are not consistently applied. Staff do not always make the best use of communication aids and technology to enable students to gain the most from lessons.
- Outstanding teaching occurs when teachers pay close attention to the individual needs and abilities of each student and an infectious enthusiasm for learning is created. For example, in a superb science lesson each student was made acutely aware of his or her long-term and short-term targets, designed to aid learning. Consequently, each enthusiastically participated, getting the most from the lesson.
- The adults care for students extremely well and are well supported by professionals such as the

school nurse. The very high standard of guidance and support provided is a feature of the school and is instrumental in encouraging students of all ages to enjoy lessons, contribute their best and achieve well. An example of this was observed when a group of secondary students were planning to use the school banking system. Staff expertly supported them in making decisions; students recorded their thinking using technology and staff helped them use very effective speaking and listening skills to report their findings to others.

- On occasion, teaching is less effective because teachers do not establish clear small-step targets for students' learning. Here, students are not sure exactly what should be achieved and classroom assistants cannot work as effectively as they might in supporting learning.
- Learning is sometimes slowed by students having to work as part of a large group, waiting to take a turn. This very occasionally happens, for example, when teachers spend too long talking and students are not given sufficient time to work independently and think things out for themselves.
- In most lessons, however, there is plenty for students to do and teachers provide interesting and well-matched activities for their classes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The good behaviour of students comes from the high standard of support that they receive from the adults in school.
- Often, behaviour is of a very high level but it is not outstanding overall because occasionally, when there is too little for them to do in lessons or teachers talk for too long, students' concentration slips and their attention wavers.
- Students feel safe in school and report that there is very little bullying or harassment because of the high level of staff supervision. These views are supported by parents.
- Attendance is high compared to most other special schools. Unauthorised absences are almost unknown and there are no exclusions. Students report that they enjoy coming to school and they like to be in class.
- Students are extremely supportive of each other. Despite their learning difficulties, many communicate well, as was witnessed by the inspector during the meeting of the school council when representatives made their views known. When asked what was good about the school, they talked about the support of the adults and the friendship of other students.
- Through their regular attendance and participation in learning, students gain self-esteem and self-confidence. They learn to participate in a wide range of lunchtime clubs such as the choir. Even those with the most extreme difficulties take part in out-of-school activities such as residential holidays, including some that will take place abroad.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For many, the personal developments they make by the time they leave school are outstanding. They are well prepared for moving on to the next stages of their lives and in recent times all have gone on to education, training or employment.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management at all levels are good and improving rapidly, particularly in respect of the work of the governing body and the headteacher.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has improved the quality of teaching through using robust performance management systems. These have guided teachers in providing increasingly better lessons. As a consequence, students now gain more from lessons and this is reflected in the steady improvements made in their rates of progress.
- The headteacher ensures the school knows itself well and where the strengths and weaknesses lie. A consequence of this has been that the systems for recording and reporting information about how students learn and make progress have been considerably strengthened in the last

year. This evidences some outstanding aspects of leadership and management. Planning for the future development of the school is based on the headteacher's evaluations of the school and they are mainly in line with the findings of the inspection.

- Staff are supportive of the headteacher's improvement measures. Morale is high and they report pride in working here.
- Very many of the students placed at the school experience difficulties with mobility. Some are further constrained by issues with feeding and medication. Many have complex care arrangements. Nevertheless, the school has traditionally set out to encourage all, whatever their level of difficulty and need, to be as mobile as possible and take part in a wide range of physical education and sports. The physical well-being of secondary students is supported by activities that include rock climbing and outdoor education.
- The primary sports extra funding is used well to provide more opportunities for swimming to the groups whom the funding supports. The aim is to ensure that all, whatever their skill levels, gain the confidence to continue a physical activity in their lives beyond school and the rate of participation so far has been good.
- Parents are generally very supportive of the leadership and management of the school. Some, however, reported concerns to the inspector about aspects of communication between school and home, and their views were supported by the findings of the inspection. Occasionally, parents are not given the full or latest information about how their children operate in class and how some, particularly complex, care arrangements for them are managed.
- The local authority recognises the good work of Brooklands managers. It has supported them with an advisory service that is appropriate and effective in aiding school development.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The work of the governing body has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection. Governors now provide the support and challenge the school needs to succeed. Members have recently held the headteacher to account about the information published concerning students' attainments and progress. They fully understand how the pupil premium funding has been used to aid the basic skills development of students supported by the funding. Members have looked closely at the information derived from teachers' performance management and appraisal and have a clear understanding of why the headteacher has set specific targets for improvement, how each teacher is supported with professional development and what additional funding is applied, including performance-related pay. The governing body has undertaken performance management with the headteacher so that appropriate targets for improvement have been set in respect of her work. All of the requirements for safeguarding are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121778
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	425899

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Clarke
Headteacher	Denise Sansom
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2011
Telephone number	01756 794028
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